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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000563

SIPDIS
DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E
LONDON, PARIS, ROME FOR AFRICA WATCHER
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TAGS: PREL MOPS MASS KPKO SO ER ET DJ XA
SUBJECT: DJIBOUTIAN FM REPORTS IGAD SEEKS MORE AGGRESSIVE MANDATE FOR
AMISOM

REF: 09 DJIBOUTI 555; 09 DJIBOUTI 525

CLASSIFIED BY: Eric Wong, DCM, U.S. Department of State, U.S.
Embassy, Djibouti; REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (S) SUMMARY. According to Djiboutian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, IGAD Foreign Ministers agree that the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) requires a more robust mandate, with Uganda urging the need to "review the rules of engagement." Youssouf also highlighted AMISOM's need for helicopters and armored vehicles, to enable AMISOM to take more aggressive actions to stabilize Mogadishu. All of Somalia's neighbors, except Eritrea, agree on a common regional approach of supporting Somalia's Transitional Federal Government (TFG), Youssouf said. In contrast, Eritrea continues to serve as a regional spoiler: rejecting the TFG's legitimacy, ignoring appeals from regional organizations to vacate Djiboutian territory occupied since early 2008, and reportedly infiltrating Eritrea-trained insurgents into northern Djibouti. FM Youssouf said Djibouti welcomed the recent adoption of UNSCR 1872, as well as the USG's positive response to Djibouti's request for assistance in transporting Somali TFG forces to Djibouti for training. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) In a May 27 meeting with Ambassador and DCM, Foreign Minister Mahmoud Ali Youssouf said the GODJ welcomed the May 26 adoption of UNSCR 1872, as it reinforced previous statements supporting the TFG from the African Union (AU) and IGAD. He noted, however, President Guelleh's concern that UNSCR 1872 did not explicitly identify the means by which the international community was to support the TFG in the establishment of a National Security Force and a Somali Force. If aid could not be given directly to TFG forces, then perhaps AMISOM could serve as the medium, Youssouf said.

REGIONAL LEADERS AGREE AMISOM REQUIRES MORE AGGRESSIVE MANDATE

¶3. (C) Youssouf highlighted the need to revise AMISOM's mandate to allow it to take more aggressive actions to stabilize Mogadishu. According to Youssouf, there had been consensus at the recently concluded IGAD Ministerial to give AMISOM a more robust mandate, with Ugandan Foreign Minister Sam Kutesa leading the call to "review the rules of engagement." According to Youssouf, on May 25, Ethiopian Foreign Minister Seyoum Mesfin had raised with Kenyan Foreign Minister Moses Wetangula the need for a concerted approach by IGAD members to the AU and to the UN Security Council, in support of such measures, as well as the need to apply greater pressure on Eritrea.

¶4. (S) AMISOM needed helicopters for better surveillance, as well as armored vehicles, Youssouf said, noting that he had advised Somali TFG President Sheikh Sharif (now en route to Tripoli) to

submit a formal written request to the UN, in order to help identify the TFG's most urgent needs. Youssouf also noted that the GODJ would seek reimbursement from the USG for two shipments of unspecified weapons Djibouti had recently provided to the TFG. Ambassador asked for a detailed list of the items, in order to convey the request to the Department. The Minister stressed the need to backfill the arms and ammunition quickly, in view of the continued threat from Eritrea.

15. (C) Per guidance from AF, Ambassador informed FM Youssouf that the USG would be able to support Djibouti's request for assistance (refs A-B) to transport (via contract air) an initial contingent of approximately two hundred Somali security forces to Djibouti for training. Ambassador explained that the USG would need details of the number, names, units, dates of travel, departure and arrival locations, etc. The Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation (OSC) chief will follow up with GODJ military to obtain this information.

ERITREAN-TRAINED FIGHTERS ALLEGEDLY INFILTRATE DJIBOUTI

16. (C) Djibouti remained concerned about illicit Eritrean arms deliveries to insurgents in Somalia, Youssouf said, noting that Eritrean President Isaias continued to reject recognition of the TFG. Except for Eritrea, all the countries in the region were united in seeking a common approach to support Somalia, Youssouf said.

17. (S) Eritrea also continued to seek to destabilize Djibouti, Youssouf said. He reported that Ethiopian FM Seyoum had informed him on May 24 of Ethiopian intelligence that more than 200 rebel fighters (presumably ethnic Afars), who had been trained in

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Eritrea, had infiltrated Djibouti via Ras Doumeira—which has been occupied continuously by Eritrean troops since at least March 2008. Youssouf said Djibouti responded to the report by putting Djiboutian troops on alert, and activating additional forces along the border with Eritrea.

18. (C) Commenting on Eritrean President Isaias's numerous recent appearances in international media (including Egyptian media, Al Jazeera, and even Voice of America), Youssouf said Isaias continued to deny any incursion into Djibouti. Instead, Isaias had asserted that the border crisis was "fabricated", and had continued to defy the AU, IGAD, and Arab League, calling such international organizations "moribund."

19. (S) COMMENT. Djibouti's common borders with Somalia and Eritrea, and its close ties to ethnic groups in both countries, make these neighbors a key security concern for Djibouti. As the host of IGAD's Secretariat, Djibouti actively supports IGAD and its diplomatic efforts to bolster Somalia's TFG. Djibouti will soon observe a national day of mourning (June 10), to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the outbreak of armed hostilities with Eritrea—and of Eritrea's continued military occupation of Ras Doumeira. Despite the burden of defending its northern border, Djibouti continues to use its modest means to provide material support to the TFG. END COMMENT.

SWAN